

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 15, 2004

There were 130 voters present at 7:15pm which met the quorum requirement of 128. Mr. Ray Lyons introduced Mr. Frank Belitsky who spoke about the growth in the senior citizen population in Groton and the efforts the Council on Aging is making at fundraising. Selectman Peter Cunningham made a motion to elect Ray Lyons to serve, in the absence of the Moderator, as temporary moderator for this Special Town Meeting. Town Clerk Onorina Maloney swore in Ray Lyons as Moderator Pro Tempore. Ray Lyons made several announcements including the astounding season that the Groton-Dunstable Boys' Varsity Basketball Team had! Among their great efforts was making the Finals Tournament. There was a loud applause recognizing the Team's efforts. A motion was made to waive the reading of the warrant. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 1

Moved and seconded that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by eminent domain or purchase, a temporary easement over, on, through and under the property located off Gilson Road adjacent to the Littleton town line and shown on Groton Assessors' Map 135, Lot 38 and Map 253, Lot 2, for the purpose of conducting such site investigations and assessments as are necessary to determine the suitability of the property for the site of an elementary school; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend from the remaining balance of the \$75,000 appropriated for acquisition evaluation costs for such property under Article 12 of the warrant for the April 28, 2003 Annual Town Meeting such sum as is required for the acquisition of the easement.

Selectman Peter Cunningham commented that at the ATM April 2003 that engineering work was approved to be done and that this article is essentially to allow engineers to go on the site and determine if it is indeed a suitable site. Should the site be suitable then the Town would be back at another Town Meeting for further discussion. Selectman Thomas Hartnett thanked all the voters in attendance and reminded everyone that the purpose of this meeting was not to discuss whether to build on this site but to conduct the feasibility study. Moderator Ray Lyons commented that the reason the Finance Committee did not take a position was because this was not a monetary article. Judy Converse, from the School Committee spoke about the necessity of having this study done this spring. In addition, she echoed Selectman Hartnett's comments that this article is merely permission to conduct the study. The School Committee unanimously endorsed the continuation of the study. Martha Robillard asked about the perk testing and how the Town would obtain a good test given the unusually dry past few months. Michelle Collette co-chair of the Building Committee commented that the Engineering studies show that we have lots of data and that soil testing takes into account the seasonal fluctuations. Joshua Degen spoke about that the status of this land was still questionable at the ATM 2003 and he had concerns about another eminent domain taking of this land. He said that the Town should explore other sites. Jane Allen from the School Committee said that many students would have a great distance to go if an elementary school would be built at the New High School since the largest student population is in the East part of Town. The School Committee looked at over 25 sites and determined that this site offers the most feasibility. Karen Riggert from the School Committee spoke about when and if this land proves to be feasible then we will have a choice to make decisions about the land. Leslie Lathrop spoke about how she participated in past land studies and that the perfect site does not exist. The Committee looked for buildable land and took into consideration the location, accessibility and safety. Mr. Patierno asked about the cost of the

\$75,000 allocated for this study. Town Counsel David Doneski, said the money appropriated for this study will cover the expenses. Michelle Collette said to date we have spent \$7,000 and that \$10,000 to \$12,000 will cover engineering costs. Mrs. Becky Pine commented that we lost time and money with the Walker site and we now need to find out about this land and that we should go ahead with the study. The chair explained that the motion required a 2/3 vote. There were 159 voters present at 8 pm. Tellers were called and sworn as follows:

David Riggert Joelle Graham Peter Carson

Gary Hogle Paul Fitzgerald Connie Sartini

Article 1 failed to carry by a two-thirds majority: 98 in favor, 60 against.

The chair entertained a motion to dissolve the Special Town Meeting. The motion was made and seconded.

The motion to dissolve the meeting carried unanimously.

The chair dissolved the Special Town Meeting at 8:06 pm